

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

International Consultative Meeting on Expanding Waste Management Services in Developing Countries, 18-19 March 2010, Tokyo, Japan

I. Introduction

1. The International Consultative Meeting on Expanding Waste Management Services in Developing Countries was held in Tokyo, Japan on 18-19 March 2010. As an inter-sessional event of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 18-19), the International Consultative Meeting was co-organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan (MoE-Japan), the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), and supported by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES). The issue of waste management, among others, will be considered by the CSD at its 18th and 19th sessions. Representatives of public waste utilities, private sector entities, national and local governments, local communities, scientific and research institutions, and civil society from twenty-one countries representing all regions, nine international organizations and agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system actively contributed to the deliberations of the meeting.
2. The rapid increase in volume and diversification of wastes resulting mainly from economic growth, urbanization, industrialization, and unsustainable production and consumption patterns have severe negative consequences for the global and local environment, natural resources, public health, local economies, and living conditions. It also undermines progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. The development of appropriate policy frameworks and institutional arrangements has increasingly been recognized as a prerequisite for enhancing efficiency in waste management services to local communities, and for overcoming health- and environment-related challenges resulting from poor service provision and facilities.
3. The Consultative Meeting was organized to discuss waste management challenges in developing countries, including the need to consider integrated management strategies, and potential solutions and opportunities to address these within the context of sustainable development, highlighting the important role of women in waste management and, to contribute substantively to the preparation of the Secretary-General's report for consideration during the policy session (CSD-19)

4. The Meeting was opened by Mr. Nobumori Otani, Parliamentary Secretary of the Environment, MoE-Japan. In his welcoming remarks, he emphasized the importance of sound waste management against the backdrop of rapidly increasing waste volumes and waste diversity. He underlined the Japanese Government's determination to address waste management challenges, including through 3R approaches, and also to meet its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 25 per cent by 2020, notably by integrating approaches to bring about a low-carbon society and a sound material-cycle society. Noting Japan's good historical waste management practices, he highlighted Japan's contributions to international discussions and progress concerning waste-related issues, including the promotion of the 3Rs in Asia through the "3R Initiative" since 2004.
5. Delivering his opening remarks, H.E. Dr. Luis Alberto Ferraté Felice, Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-18) and the Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources, Guatemala, urged the international community to make concerted efforts to build climate-resilient societies and economies. He highlighted the fact that the hardest hit from climate change would be the poorer sections of society because of increased vulnerability to extreme weather events, in which inadequate waste management services and infrastructure play a part. Underscoring the importance of the objectives found in the MDGs and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), Dr. Ferraté urged developing countries to build and implement effective partnerships to expand community waste management services. He also recommended that they identify alternative paths to prevent economic decline and environmental degradation.
6. The Director of the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), DESA of the United Nations Secretariat, Mr. Tariq Banuri, introduced the CSD process and its objectives, including the fourth implementation cycle (CSD 18-19). He emphasized that waste management is at the heart of the sustainable development movement. He stated that the poor are capable of solving their own problems but cited economic, financial, psychological, institutional, and technical obstacles that present particular challenges for them. He also reminded the participants that the ultimate goal must be to reach "zero waste". He closed by urging active engagement to establish a global partnership on waste management.

II. Common Issues and Challenges in the area of waste management in developing countries

7. Developing countries face a number of issues in expanding waste management services at the local level, in particular, the lack of capacity for developing and implementing integrated solid waste management systems; the inability to deal with emerging and complex waste streams such as e-waste; limited public awareness and stakeholder involvement, particularly women, in decision-making processes; and divergence in and lack of coordination among agencies at the local level. This is further compounded by the absence of comprehensive policies, laws, and regulations to promote sustainable waste management. In this regard, the lack of institutional framework and capacity for training waste management professionals and weak infrastructure for data collection, analysis and monitoring was particularly highlighted. The limited capacity and readiness to improve the working conditions of the informal sector was also addressed.
8. Financial and technological limitations were considered major challenges hindering the expansion of waste management services at the local level. The inadequacy of funds both for investment in and operation of waste management was underscored, as well as the lack of information about and access to alternative financing mechanisms. Low levels of interest in funding from the private sector were considered the result of unclear business models and limited understanding of business potential in waste management.
9. Insufficient information on and access to appropriate technologies, particularly new and innovative recycling systems, and a lack of capacity to assess those most appropriate for application was identified as a major obstacle to waste management development.
10. **In order to meet these challenges, the meeting recommended** that increased assistance to national and local governments in developing and enhancing policy and regulatory frameworks in the waste sector be provided. Support for the establishment of regional and sub-regional mechanisms required to develop waste management plans that motivate policymakers was suggested, and the sharing of experiences on successful and unsuccessful policy interventions encouraged.
11. The importance of encouraging and strengthening institutional capacity and the promotion of greater research on waste-*cum*-resource management concepts, technologies, and services was highlighted. In this regard, there was identified need to support the development of institutions to improve data collection and analysis with a view to advancing effective waste management. Tailoring waste management strategies

to local conditions to promote the shift from managing waste to considering waste as a resource and as drivers for partnership formation was also considered.

12. In selecting technology, the meeting also identified the need to give strong consideration to strengthening local capacity in the areas of operation and maintenance. Improvement in the skills and knowledge of local workers, both formal and informal, including women workers was urged. The importance of raising solid waste management as an issue of public interest at the national level and improving the understanding of linkages between waste management and resource consumption was stressed.
13. Increased involvement of civil society organizations and other actors at the local level on information dissemination, capacity development, technology support, policy dialogues, and the mobilization of innovative financing mechanisms, as well as the creation of market opportunities for products from recycled materials was recommended. In this regard, the promotion of partnerships among stakeholders, including women, and the encouragement of public-private dialogues on resource mobilization and enhanced resource efficiencies was also encouraged.
14. The development of viable business models to attract private sector investment, and micro-financing schemes particularly to support informal groups/NGOs, including women's associations was encouraged. The meeting also encouraged expanded support from multilateral financial institutions for waste management initiatives.
15. The meeting emphasized the need for effective mechanisms to ensure cost recovery and long-term financial viability of waste management systems and ensure that sufficient funding is allocated to waste processing, in addition to resources spent on collection and transportation and to secure the existence of a post-Kyoto Protocol carbon finance mechanism.
16. The importance of intensifying awareness-raising at all levels and ensure engagement of different stakeholders in the decision-making process through active media campaigns, establishment of regular stakeholder consultation forums and empowerment of community-based organizations was also highlighted.
17. Finally, there is an overall need to bring about an attitudinal change in perceptions on waste so as to facilitate proliferation of upstream initiatives to make downstream initiatives much easier to accomplish.

III. Innovative Approaches and Strategies for Integrated Waste Management

18. The meeting recognized that issues related to resource and waste management are intrinsically linked, and should therefore be addressed in an integrated manner. Integrated Waste Management (IWM) provides such an opportunity. IWM is an inclusive strategy that maximizes opportunities for growth and employment and, at the same time, ensures that resources are conserved and human health is protected.
19. Policies and strategies for IWM should be addressed at the national level and should be considered as a part of the national programme for resource management. The Sound Material Cycle Society in Japan, Circular Economy in China, Thematic Strategy on Waste Prevention and Recycling in the European Union (EU), and Green Growth concept in the Republic of Korea are examples of such strategies.
20. Many types of regulatory, economic, and information-based policy instruments have been widely used for the promotion of IWM in developed countries. Economic instruments follow the Polluter Pays Principle and include user and tipping fees, penalties or disincentives, subsidies and pollution taxes. The meeting recognized the need to pilot the application of such economic instruments in developing countries. Based on their evaluation and local experience, the relevant policies and regulatory framework may be strengthened.
21. The meeting also noted that strategies for IWM are therefore not “one size fits all”. Even within a country, the challenges associated with resource and waste management may differ for the urban and rural contexts.
22. IWM strategies need to be region-specific and related solutions should be customized to suit the particular situations, priorities, institutional capabilities, and financial resources in the different parts of the world. Immediate focus areas for many developing regions were identified as improvement of collection coverage and efficiency, treatment and disposal infrastructure, and rehabilitation of existing open dump sites in a cost-effective manner.
23. IWM-related programmes that offer a good scope for innovation to manufacturers including Extended Producer Responsibility, Cleaner Production, and Design for Environment to reduce amounts of waste, improve resource efficiency, and enhance cost savings should be encouraged. Waste exchanges should be promoted at industrial clusters, since such arrangements will divert waste from disposal to beneficial uses and,

at the same time, save considerable cost by avoiding disposal.

24. National-level actions should also include the development of waste-related quality standards and the introduction of market-based instruments such as taxes, fees, penalties, and subsidies.

25. Revenues from Certified Emission Reduction units under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) have become attractive aspects of waste management., increasing opportunities to reduce GHG emissions in the waste lifecycle. These opportunities can improve the economic viability of investments related to waste management. The meeting recognized the urgent need to build the capacity of local authorities in understanding CDM-related opportunities and train professionals in the developing world for the preparation of CDM projects. A programmatic approach to the CDM relevant to the waste sector at the national level is necessary.

26. Strategies for IWM require adequate institutional capacity. Extensive awareness-raising within communities, education, and capacity-building efforts are essential, especially in the developing world, supported by appropriate resources and “tool kits”. This may require a long-term, well-designed capacity-building programme, grounded in multi-layered and cross-cutting stakeholder networks for knowledge and exchange.
27. The meeting also recognized that the “3R Initiative” is essential for the development of IWM strategies. Existing mechanisms such as the Regional 3R Forum in Asia should be expanded or replicated in Africa, Latin America, and other regions.
28. International and regional cooperation was deemed essential for the promotion IWM. Such cooperation could trigger sharing of information on national policies, regulations, and standards on the practicing of the 3Rs and be helpful in broadly disseminating best practices. Networking and information sharing mechanisms are needed at regional as well as global levels.
29. Recommendations in the area of policy integration include increasing the examples demonstrating the operationalization of national waste-related policies at the local level in order to improve the effectiveness of national-level policy instruments for action on the ground; and utilizing a greater variety of policy instruments and cross-policy integration, such as eco-housing policies to require on-site management of organic waste through composting/bio-methanation.

30. Recommendations in the area of economic instruments include introducing volume-based fees to reduce waste; the introduction of cross-subsidy charges based on income levels which also incorporate incentives for waste recycling;
31. Recommendations in the area of managing different waste streams include the decentralization of waste management to small- to medium-sized towns, utilizing community engagement, composting/biomethanation technology, market creation, training, and incentives such as the CDM; the management of special waste streams such as food waste from restaurants; consideration of integrated treatment of waste streams such as sewage sludge and food waste with municipal solid waste; and the utilization of dedicated timing and routes for collection of recyclable materials.

IV. Issues with the Informal Sector

32. The meeting paid special attention to the challenges of the informal sector in waste management. It was recognized that waste pickers and recyclers make significant contributions to sustainable resource management. They reduce municipalities' expenditures for waste collection and disposal, provide inexpensive second-hand products, and make secondary materials available for local industries. However, despite the benefits gained by the work carried out by the informal waste sector, they continue to receive little attention from governments.
33. The meeting therefore underscored the continuing challenge for policy makers to address the needs of the informal waste management sector, taking step to improve their working conditions.
34. Recommendations in the area of engagement with the informal sector include increasing the involvement of the informal sector in recycling and in waste-product conversion as entrepreneurial pursuits; promoting financial mechanisms targeting the informal sector and, promoting wider receptivity to the informal sector's interest in pursuing legal status and gaining professional skills.

V. Strengthening Partnership to Enhance Technical and Financial Cooperation towards Sustainable Waste Management at Local Level

35. Given the limited financial and technical capabilities of municipalities in developing countries, the meeting underscored the importance of international cooperation for capacity building, technology transfer, diffusing best practices and experiences among

member states, and forging effective partnerships for the expansion of waste management services.

36. The meeting strongly encouraged the expansion of global partnership on waste management to help achieve the MDGs from the perspective of sustainable development. In this context, a fully participatory approach to the mobilization of resources, including the active engagement of the private sector should be promoted.
37. Such a broad cooperative platform would enhance support for a range of initiatives in sustainable waste management at the local level, addressing key measures and solutions such as implementation of an enabling policy framework for efficient and required waste management services; replication of feasible and affordable technologies, including 3R measures; pro-poor community- based waste management efforts in support of income generation and poverty eradication; and PPP, in order to make waste management services sustainable and incremental.

VI. Meeting conclusion and Follow-up

38. The participants expressed their deep appreciation to the government of Japan for organizing and hosting this important meeting. They also expressed their appreciation to UN/DESA and UNCRD for co-organizing this consultative meeting, as well as other institutions and agencies for their valuable contributions to it.
39. The meeting acknowledged the Government of Japan's intention to continue its support for similar activities, including the follow-up meeting scheduled to be held in January 2011, as an input to CSD-19.
40. The participants affirmed their wish that the Chair's Summary with the relevant documentation of the meeting be presented by the Government of Japan to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighteenth session in May 2010.